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DISCOURSE.

GENESIS, xxviii. 17.

This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven.

It is true — we learn it from the Gospel of Christ, as well as from the teachings of reason — that “ God who made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands ; ” — that He does not confine the influences of his Spirit within the walls of any earthly sanctuary ; — that “ His temple is all space, His altar, earth, sea, skies ; ” — and that every part of His boundless dominion is filled with the glories of His power, and the brighter splendors of His goodness. We learn it from the Gospel of Christ, as well as from the teachings of reason, that God’s eye of holiness and love is looking down upon us in the closet, where we pray to Him in secret, no less than in the public assembly ; — that “ He is not far from every one of us, since in Him we live, and move, and have our being ; ” — that it is only by faith, by an act of the mind, not of the body, that we bring ourselves into His presence ; — that to the

holy all places are holy ; — and that Jesus, when he lifted up his eyes to Heaven in the open fields of Judea, was heard with no less acceptance than when he spake and worshipped in the temple at Jerusalem. But, true as this is, it is equally true that, as men, as finite beings, creatures of sense, we all need certain times and places and forms to aid us in the fit expression and exercise of devout feelings ; and that when such feelings have been repeatedly awakened in certain places, at certain times, by certain forms, they at length become strongly associated with each other in our minds, so that these outward circumstances have power to suggest and renew those inward affections and thoughts with which they have been so often connected, while, on the other hand, the sacredness, which belongs in fact only to the subject and the sentiment, is transferred in some degree by association to the spot and the occasion. This one obvious consideration, independent of all others, is sufficient to show, — if, indeed, it be not too plain to need any proof, — that it is not superstition, but the sound philosophy of the heart, which hallows and sets apart to religious uses some chosen place where, from Sabbath to Sabbath, God may be worshipped, His character and providence made known, the religion of the Saviour preached, defended, explained, and enforced ; where, from Sabbath to Sabbath, we may assemble with our families and friends, and publicly acknowledge our common dependence upon the Almighty Father and our accountability to His laws.

For this purpose have we erected the house in which we are to-day met for the first time : — and we are now assembled according to ancient and appropriate usage to dedicate it to the worship of God and the teaching of Christianity. From the earliest times it has been customary to set apart the temples of the Lord by some special ceremony to the uses for which they were erected. This ceremony, like all others, has had its abuses and perversions. It has been made, in some countries, an occasion of priestly pomp, or of superstitious mummary. But, in the *principle* on which it is founded, it must approve itself to the feelings and the judgment of all ; and when observed, as it commonly has been among us, it can be objected to only by those who are disposed to cavil at *all* forms however natural and simple. It is hardly necessary to say to any here present, that by this act of dedication we do not expect to invest these walls with any mystic and peculiar sanctity such as they would not have without it ; — such as to make the prayers and vows of the worshipper more acceptable to God than if they were offered up in any other place with that spirit of faith, which alone can hallow them. The ceremony in which we now engage is simply a public and solemn declaration of the purposes for which this house has been built and to which it is hereafter to be appropriated ; and a public and solemn expression of our dependence upon God, whose presence and blessing we now invoke for the successful accomplishment of those purposes.

To what purposes, then, and in what spirit, are we now, as Christians, to dedicate this house?

We dedicate it in the first place to the worship of the only living and true God; the King eternal, immortal, invisible; the Maker of heaven and of earth; the Preserver and Ruler of the universe; the Governor of angels and of men; the centre and the source of life, knowledge, happiness; the all-powerful, all-wise, all-holy, all-merciful, all-good; whose tender mercies are over all his works, all his creatures, in the punishments of hell, as well as in the rewards of heaven; our greatest Benefactor, our everlasting Friend; on whom we depend for life, breath, and all things; by whose power, every moment exerted, we are preserved in being; by whose goodness, ever operating, we are surrounded with privileges and enjoyments; by whose providence all events are so ordered as to produce the greatest amount of happiness to each and to all; — the heart-searching Witness, and righteous Judge, to whom we are accountable for the deeds done in the body; whose will it is our highest wisdom to learn, to do, and to bear; whose favor is better than life, whose displeasure is more to be feared than death; — to sum up all in a few comprehensive names, our Father in Heaven, — the Father of Lights, — the Father of our immortal spirits, and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. To this glorious and good Being we would henceforth unitedly offer in this place the sacrifices of love and faith; of thanksgiving for his mercies; of supplication for his pardon and guidance; and of

intercession for His blessing upon our friends, our fellow-citizens, our fellow-Christians, our brothermen of every name and nation under heaven.

Secondly, we dedicate this house to the teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We believe that he is the Messiah, the Son of the living God ; that he was divinely authorized and empowered to teach us the most important of all truths ; the character of the Supreme Being, the principles of His government, the conditions of His forgiveness, our relations to Him, our duty, our destination, our true happiness, the great objects of the present life and its connexion with the life to come. We believe that he was sent by the Father upon the most sublime and benevolent mission which was ever entrusted to any being who has appeared upon this earth ; that he came to promote the everlasting happiness of the whole human family ; that he came to educate us for God and for eternity, to qualify us for the nearer presence and enjoyment and service of the All-Holy Spirit, and for the exalted delights and duties of the second and of all future states of existence. We believe that by obedience to the laws of his Gospel, which are the laws of eternal right and eternal excellence, that by manifesting the spirit, forming the character, living the life which he taught and exemplified, we are saved, are made happy, are formed to the image of God, and prepared for the bliss of heaven. We believe that the principles and influences of his religion are, in the course of events, and according to the laws of

Divine Providence and of the human mind, to become yet more powerful, to spread from nation to nation, to reign over the hearts of mankind at some now distant age, and thus to establish the true and only Millenium, when God in his spirit shall establish his abode with men, and Christ in his gospel shall become the King and the Saviour of the whole earth. We believe that this Gospel has within itself the elements of progress ; that as it opens to our view objects of pursuit and imitation, which are of an infinite character, as it is free from all those peculiarities and temporary and local forms which would limit its influence to any one age or nation, it will, in every advancing stage of human improvement, be still in advance of the human mind. We believe that Christianity is fitted and designed to promote the best interests of society as well as of individuals ; and that in proportion as a community are penetrated with a sense of its value and truth, and are generally enlightened by its quickening doctrines and sanctified by its moral power, in the same proportion will that community be free, prosperous, peaceful and happy. We believe in short that “ the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world ; ” — the Saviour of the world by his teaching, his example, and the various influences of that Gospel, which he sealed with his blood upon the cross. — We acknowledge it, then, to be the great duty and privilege of all in every station, be they ministers or laymen, to do what in them lies for the support and propagation of this Gospel ; for fixing its prin-

principles in their own minds and hearts, and for communicating them to others ; and thus to be fellow-workers with God and Christ in sanctifying and saving immortal souls.

We therefore solemnly dedicate this house to the service of Christianity ; to the preaching of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come. Here may the truths of the Gospel, its precepts, its promises, its warnings, its motives, and its sanctions be proclaimed with faithfulness and simplicity ; be received with attentive and understanding minds ; and bring forth the abundant fruits of holiness and peace.

But in dedicating this house to the teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as the Son of God and the spiritual Saviour of man, it is well known that our views concerning the nature of Christ and the doctrines of his Gospel differ from those which are held by many of our fellow-Christians. Christianity, as *we* understand it, has been and is still connected with many and great errors. — Though it was established in the world by miraculous power, it was not exempted from the common influences and ordinary laws which regulate the course of events in the moral world. The good seed of the word was planted by the hand of God ; but left to grow free and wild in the great field of human nature. It did grow and flourish, till it spread over the earth. But it was not preserved by a perpetual miracle from the changes and corruptions, to which all truth is liable in its transmission from one mind to another, and from one age

and nation to another. Hence, as might be expected, it has been often disfigured and darkened in its progress through past ages by the false philosophy of the times; and is still, as we think, incrustated with errors of doctrine which grew up and gathered about it in the earlier and darker ages of the church. With the Reformation, indeed, we date a new and glorious era in the history of our religion, when the principles of religious liberty, the right of free inquiry, and the sufficiency of the Scriptures as a standard of faith and practice, began to be understood and recognised. But the Reformation only commenced the work, which is yet to be completed. The Reformers were fallible men like ourselves. We would follow them only so far as they followed Christ. Our Puritan fathers, much as their memory is to be venerated, were fallible men like ourselves. And we would follow *them*, only so far as they followed Christ. We receive only those doctrines, which, with our means of information, and according to our best judgment, appear to us the doctrines of Scripture and reason; and all others we reject, however venerable may be the names and the characters of those by whom they may have been held in past times. We trust that, were they now living, they would be willing to “receive farther light than that which they at first received;” and that in the world of spirits, where they enjoy the society and the instructions of Jesus, they have already received it.

A sounder philosophy, a more enlightened criticism, juster views of Scriptural interpretation,

deeper researches into ecclesiastical history, together with the general advancement of all the branches of human knowledge, have thrown new lights upon the truths of religion. We enjoy greater advantages than our predecessors, and those who follow us will enjoy greater advantages than the men of this age, for farther progress. We therefore rejoice in the hope that religious knowledge will continue to advance, as it has hitherto done, and that men's views of God and of their relations to Him will become more clear, and more spiritual, and that this is more likely to be the case in our own country, where the people are generally well informed, and there are no unnatural restraints upon free inquiry and the independent expression of opinion, than in the old world. But even here in the freest state of society, the truth as it is in Jesus, if it differ, as we are convinced it does, from those systems of doctrine which have been generally received, has still many obstacles to encounter. It must contend with ignorance and prejudice; with misunderstanding and misrepresentation; with the apathy of the indifferent, and the backwardness of the temporizing; with conscientious opposition and interested hostility; with the errors of early education, which linger about the minds of the best men, and often make them violent, though well-meaning, opposers of new doctrines; and with wrong principles of reasoning, wrong methods of studying the Scriptures, and wrong maxims of interpretation, which, as long as they prevail, must remain a fatal bar to the understand-

ing and reception of just views of Christianity. These are but a part of the many obstacles which lie in the way of religious truth, when it is at variance with received opinions. I have mentioned them only to show that we are called to exert ourselves in its defence and promotion. We are solemnly bound by our duty to God, to our Master, to our fellow-men, to expose and confute what we regard as important errors, connected with the Gospel, and to show that doctrines which have been hitherto considered as an essential part of Christianity are not contained in the New Testament, when it is interpreted and understood aright.

We dedicate this house, then, to the worship of God, and the teaching of the Gospel, in the spirit of a Christian zeal for those doctrines which we from our hearts believe to be the truth of God ; in the spirit of a Christian zeal for what we deem to be just, practical, and evangelical views of religion and duty.

But earnestness in the cause of truth is not inconsistent with respect, kindness, and brotherly love towards those who differ from us in religious opinions. We would therefore dedicate this house to the worship of God and the teaching of Christ's Gospel, in the spirit of an enlightened charity as well as of a sincere zeal. However firmly we may contend for our own faith and our own rights, however strenuously we may resist what we deem the mistaken measures and erroneous doctrines of our fellow-Christians, God forbid that we should do so in a bitter and intolerant temper. We are not

so ignorant, or so presumptuous as to expect a uniformity of opinion, which never has and never can be established while man is man. We see that religious differences and religious controversies are unavoidable from the very constitution of the human mind, the circumstances of our condition, and the nature of the subjects of religion.

While there exists so wide a diversity among men in their capacities, their acquisitions, their means of information, and the influences by which they are surrounded, it is not strange that their views and opinions should have a corresponding diversity. One man sees only a part of the facts on which another has built his opinion ; or if his knowledge of facts be as extensive, his mode of reasoning upon them may be different. He may view them under different relations, and draw from them different conclusions. You therefore find two persons of apparently equal opportunities of information passing opposite judgments upon questions in history, in politics, in the science of education, in the theory of government, in the principles of political economy, in ethics, in metaphysics, in natural philosophy, in astronomy, and in all the thousand branches of human knowledge. If such a diversity of sentiment exists even among those who have been brought up under similar influences, similar associations, similar modes of instruction, whose habits of thinking and feeling are therefore similar, what else can we expect among those whose circumstances and opportunities have been entirely different ? — What is true with respect to all other

subjects is true also of religion, and probably to a still wider extent. — For in this *all* men have an interest, and a deep one. It addresses itself to their strongest fears and hopes. It involves their welfare not only for time but for eternity. They are therefore more generally concerned in this than in any other subject, and more likely, not only to form opinions, but to lay stress on the opinions they may form.

Besides, the subjects of religious difference are often of an abstruse and metaphysical nature, requiring not only extensive knowledge, but deep thought, refined discrimination and subtle reasoning. The nature, attributes, and moral government of an Infinite Being, whose perfections we can only faintly conceive and imperfectly comprehend, the mode in which He operates on the mind, the character, the powers, the destination of the soul, the conditions and means of salvation, the future world with its shadowy scenes just glimmering on our eyes, its employments, its retributions, — all present topics of dispute not easily settled by the most acute and the most enlightened.

Again, if we direct our attention more particularly to the volume of revelation, new sources of doubt and difficulty are set before us. The oracles of divine truth are uttered by God's messengers in human language, and all human language is subject to ambiguity. You can hardly write or speak a sentence which is not capable of two or more interpretations. Usually, in the common intercourse of life, we have no difficulty in ascertaining which

of them is intended by the words used. It is determined by the subject spoken of, by the laws of mental association, by the circumstances of the case already known to us, by the character and conduct of the speaker, and by many little accompaniments of gesture, tone, and look, which aid us in at once fixing upon the true idea represented by the uncertain sounds of the voice. But in *written* language we meet with much greater difficulty, because we have fewer of the aids which have been mentioned in determining the meaning. It is on account of this essential ambiguity of human language as a medium for the communication of thought, that it has been found necessary to devise the technicalities and careful repetitions and minute specifications of legal documents and legal decisions. How much nice particularity of expression is required to guard the last will and testament of the dying man against the questions that may be raised upon it. A doubtful preposition or an equivocal adverb may give rise to a long and vexatious controversy among the interested heirs. Now the books of the New Testament, the Testament of Jesus Christ, sealed with the blood of its Author are written, not like a legal document, but in a loose popular style. Its propositions are not expressed like those of a statute book, but in the style of narrative and of moral discourses, in which a legal precision is not needed nor expected. They are liable, therefore, to be variously understood and misunderstood. They are often capable of two interpretations, and to decide which is the true one will require thought

and study ; a consideration of many facts and circumstances ; and a comparison of the passage in question with many other passages, before we are properly qualified to ascertain the sense intended by the writer. — The difficulty is increased, in the case in question, by other circumstances, to which I can but briefly allude. The original languages in which the Scriptures are written are no longer spoken ; and we are often thrown adrift on the wide sea of grammatical conjecture when we attempt to explore their obscurities by the faint lights of verbal criticism. The customs and manners too of the people among whom the events recorded took place ; the peculiarities of thought and expression which mark the style of the several writers of the sacred books ; the modes of reasoning which they employ, the figures in which they delight ; the character of their minds, the circumstances of their situation ; the state of opinion and feeling among those whom they addressed ; the objections and prejudices they had to encounter ; — are all to be studied, understood, and borne in mind by one who wishes to enter into the true and full import of the Scriptures. I need not tell you how difficult it must be at this distance of time to ascertain satisfactorily all these preliminaries to a thorough understanding of the Bible. Is it wonderful, then, that it should contain much that seems obscure ? or that it should be differently understood and explained by different individuals, according to the different degrees of information which they possess, their different powers of judgment and

discrimination, and the different principles of reasoning and interpretation with which they come to the examination of the Gospel? — In view of these considerations it is out of the question, — even supposing all to be equally desirous of knowing the truth, and equally anxious to obey it — it is out of the question to expect a uniformity of religious belief in the world. There must be variety of opinion on this subject as on every other. While this variety of opinion exists, there will of course be a variety of distinct sects. Those who agree on some leading points of doctrine will organize themselves into associations for the support of what they deem to be essential or at least important truth. Thus the Christian community has always been, and always will be, divided into conflicting denominations; and controversies will continue as long as the present nature and condition of mankind remain the same.

With these views of the origin of religious differences and controversies (which, with all their evils and abuses, are useful, as means of discovering and spreading truth, and keeping up an interest in the subject of religion) we would look with the spirit of an enlightened charity on all of every name who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; who have a true desire to promote his kingdom of righteousness in themselves and in others. However erroneous their theological opinions may be, they are disciples of the same Lord whom we acknowledge, worshippers of the same God, members of that one vast church which comprehends the good and the wise of all ages

and all sects. They are fellow-travellers to the same heaven, though by various paths, which seem indeed to those who are walking in them to be widely separated, but are in fact all converging to the same common point, where the divided followers of Jesus will at length meet in a harmonious and eternal union. — We consider the different forms of belief among Christians, as but so many different shapes in which the same spirit of faith may dwell ; so many different moulds in which the same material is cast ; so many different developements of the same universal principle. The truth is, that in all these systems of theology, various and discordant as they appear, a few great principles of morality and religion, drawn from the clear teachings of the Gospel, and too plain to be disputed, exert an illuminating and sanctifying influence amidst the jarring elements of error. A little leaven of Christian truth leaveneth the noxious mass of false doctrine and makes it nutritive and wholesome. The mind, with a moral instinct, fixes upon the vital and practical part of a creed, and slides over the speculative errors connected with it. It either regards them as mysteries, and so does not think of them at all, or carry them out into their mischievous consequences, or it so explains them away, as to make them consistent with the sound conclusions of reason and common sense ; or else they are so modified by other acknowledged principles, that they do not produce the bad effects to which they tend.

Thus it happens, that doctrines, which, in speculation, involve the most dangerous and immoral

consequences, are often harmless in their practical operation upon individuals who profess them. And thus it is that many opinions concerning the attributes and government of God, the nature of man, and the mediation of Christ, which to *us* appear erroneous and unscriptural, have been firmly held by men who are entitled to our admiration and love; in whom, what we should think the natural evil tendencies of such doctrines, are counteracted by causes to which I have already alluded; and who show themselves in all their conduct and temper to be under the influence of Christian motives and principles. God be praised that it is so!— God be praised that amidst the manifold and multiplying varieties of worship, and discipline, and doctrine, the great, vital, saving, and sanctifying principles of religion rise, like the spires of our churches, above the mists and fogs of earth, seen by all eyes, and guiding us on our way to heaven! God be praised for the glorious instances of this cheering fact; for the multitude which no man can number of this and of past ages, who have shone alike in the splendors of goodness, but have been ranked under different names in theology!

On these grounds we would gladly hail as brethren all who call themselves by the name of Christ, in whom we find the Christianity of the heart and the Orthodoxy of the life. We would tolerate every thing but intolerance. *That* must be exposed and put down an enemy and an outlaw, against whom even Charity must sometimes force herself to play the warrior that she may have a more lasting

peace. In contending, however, that the fundamentals of piety and true religion, the religion of the heart, are to be found in individuals of every sect, because every sect takes the New Testament for its rule of faith, and the moral, life-giving truths which are there written are too plain to be obscured by the errors of human speculation, it does not therefore follow that it is of no consequence what we believe, or that all systems of doctrine are equally well calculated to promote real godliness, and to advance the cause of Christ in the world. That of course must be the most powerful to this end, which approaches nearest to the truth of God, and to the faith as it was once delivered to the saints. It becomes my duty, then, and the duty of every Christian, to inquire by the lights which God has given us in his word and in his works, which of the religious systems proposed to us is the true one. In pursuing this inquiry, we are to consider which is the most reasonable, the most simple, the most easily understood, the most plain and practical; and again, which is most clearly taught in Scripture, which agrees best with the undisputed doctrines of the Bible, with its prevailing spirit, with the plain declarations of Christ and the Apostles, with their conduct and the conduct of those about them. Whatever may be the result of our inquiries, whichever among the various modifications of religious belief we are led to receive, that it is our duty, by all fair means, on all proper occasions, to maintain and to spread.

In being liberal, we are not to be indifferent to

the truth. While we joyfully acknowledge, that in many religious systems, which we on the whole condemn, there may be so much good as to overbalance the evil, and while we see that it is the practical part of a creed which is always the most efficient, we are not to forget that the errors, on which it is built, or which are connected with it, are so many clogs and hindrances to the power of true religion. Men become righteous and happy, not in consequence, but in *spite* of them; and by their removal, they would be enabled to go on with a more rapid and easy step, and ascend far higher in the scale of goodness.

Besides this, we are to remember that such errors have made in past times and are still making infidels and skeptics everywhere; and that the more clear and reasonable and consistent Christianity is shown to be in all its parts, the more readily it will be embraced, the more firmly it will be held, the more powerfully it will act on the heart and the life. As far then as, for these and for other reasons, the doctrines which we hold are important, and are likely in our opinion to promote the interests of vital religion and pure Christianity among men, it is our duty to contend earnestly for them. That there are good men in every sect is no argument for indifference, but only for toleration and charity. Although errors and absurdities have been neutralized and overlooked by *some* minds, they may not be, indeed we know they have not been, by *all*. And although the sanctifying influence of essential Gospel truth, which is in its

nature universal, and stamped with the eternity of the God from whom it came, has been felt in some degree of its power in all Christian denominations, we should wish to have it embraced in that form which will give it its most extensive and efficient influence. We are bound therefore to uphold and to diffuse, as far as we have opportunity, what we conceive to be truer and higher views than those of our fellow-Christians of other denominations; always keeping before us, as the great end and object of our endeavours, the promotion of vital piety and practical religion.

Entertaining such views of the course to be pursued amid the controversies of the present day, we now dedicate this church to the worship of God and to the teaching of the Gospel in the spirit of Christian zeal for the truth, and of Christian friendship towards all who differ from us. *

Henceforth then, my brethren, we are to assemble within these walls for the worship of God and the hearing of His word. Henceforth, with each returning Sabbath, are we to offer up in this place our spiritual sacrifices of thanksgiving and prayer. Here, with each returning Sabbath, shall the voice of supplication ascend to the Father of Lights and the Father of Mercies for the gifts of His spirit; for the blessing which He has promised to His believing children; for holy dispositions and Christian graces; for perseverance in duty;

* A paragraph relating to the several churches erected for the use of the parish is here omitted; as the facts stated in it are contained in the previous discourse.

for strength to resist temptation ; for courage and cheerfulness in times of trial ; for resignation and trust and the inward peace which the world can neither give nor take away : — and these not only for ourselves, but for others ; for our friends, for our enemies, for the whole family of man. Here, with each returning Sabbath, will we sing with one accord the praises of the Most High God, and these walls shall echo back the strains of sacred melody which sound forth from the pealing organ, and the lips of the living voice. Here, with each returning Sabbath, will we sit in solemn or joyful meditations on the character and providence of the Father ; here renew the good purposes which have been choked by the cares of the world ; here dedicate our children in baptism to the service of God ; here break the bread and drink the wine of remembrance, as disciples of Him, whose body was broken, and whose blood was shed for many. Here, with each returning Sabbath, in the midst of our kindred and friends, we will hallow the bond of domestic love and the tenderness of domestic sympathy by the mingled pleasures of devotion ; here, with them, take sweet counsel from the oracles of truth on the ways and works of God, and the duties of man ; with them, prepare ourselves for death and for life, for the duties of time and the higher duties of eternity. — And may we never engage in the services of this house without a solemn sense of our dependence on the Almighty ; a sincere desire to learn and to obey His will ; and such motives and feelings as can

alone make our worship holy and acceptable in His sight. Never may these pure walls be desecrated to any unholy or uncharitable purpose. Never may this pulpit be converted into an arena for the pugilism of theology ; a show-place of polemical skill and vehemence ; a rostrum for religious demagogues ; a mount Sinai quaking with the thunders and earthquakes of denunciation. Let it be for higher and better uses. Let it be an altar of love to God, and love to man ; hallowed by the incense of heaven-seeking and heaven-blest hopes, desires, and affections ; an altar, over which the angels may sing their hymn of "*good will to men,*" and hear no jarring notes to make discord of the music ; where Charity wreathes her olive branch, and Faith kneels with upward look gazing after her ascended Lord, and the Holy Spirit breathes its still and dovelike influences ; an altar, on which the name of the Prince of *Peace* is written in the blood shed for many for the *forgiveness* of sins, and He, who is over all and in all, the God of light and of love, even the *Father*, may dwell as upon His mercy-seat between the cherubims. — Holy Father, suffer us not to profane this thy dwelling-place by bitterness, or wrath, or evil speaking.

May this place be to each one of you the house of God and the gate of heaven. May you long enjoy its ministrations. May you never slight or abuse its privileges. May many of *you* live — if he who addresses does not — till the holy associations, which will gradually gather about this sanctuary, shall have given it a more peculiar sa-

credness. But it is not probable that many of those, who are now assembled within it as witnesses of its dedication unto God, will live to see another in its place. One by one, we are hastening in silent procession to the city of the dead. One by one, the frail worshippers in this earthly temple will be laid in the arms of the all-embracing grave. Ere many years shall have rolled swiftly by, another assembly, unknown to us, will occupy these seats, and the places that have known us will know us no more. Ere many years, or perchance many months, shall have been numbered with the past, the voices of some of those who have joined in the services of this day may be hushed in death. We shall pass away and be forgotten. As we wander among the tombs of this ancient burial-place, sunken monuments and obliterated epitaphs, telling of death, but not of the dead, give us sure warning of our own fate. We shall be forgotten by the busy actors in to-morrow's history; but our example and influence for good or for evil will live and act upon the generations that follow us. We shall be forgotten of men, but not of God; we shall be forgotten, but not dead. So live, then, mortal, immortal friends, that when this earthly sanctuary no longer hears your vows, and you can no longer utter them, — when yonder sun that now shines upon your living eyes, shall clothe your grave with funeral verdure, — you may dwell in your Father's house forever; where the sun of God's presence shall shine into your hearts; where the Holy Spirit of the Ever-

living One shall overshadow the pure soul, and fill it with such peace and joy, such power and love, as we can now neither conceive of, or describe, — where you will know Him better, and love Him more fervently, and serve Him more constantly and more acceptably forever; — even in that building of God, that “house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

ERRATUM.

In the first Discourse on page 6 in the note, for “since 1815,” read “since the first Sunday in November, 1814.”







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